

Message Text

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14

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 PM-07 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 SS-15 NSC-10 PRS-01 DODE-00 RSR-01 /089 W

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P R 090800 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO COMIDEASTFOR PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0767

PERSONAL FOR ADMIRAL HANKS FROM AMBASSADOR MENDENHALL

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MA, FR, US

SUBJ: YOUR VISITS TO MADAGASCAR

REFS: COMIDEASTFOR 4537(NOTAL); TANANARIVE0703(NOTAL);
KARACHI 909(NOTAL)

1. VERY SORRY TO HAVE TO INFORM YOU THAT MALAGASY GOVT HAS
TURNED DOWN OUR REQUEST FOR AUTHROIZATION OF YOUR JUNE 27
AND JULY 3-10 VISITS TO MADAGASCAR ON TIMING GROUNDS. I WAS
ASKED CALL LATE FRIDAY, JUNE 8, BY FOREIGN OFFICE SECGEN
BEZAZA AND GIVEN THIS REPLY.

2. BEZAZA TOOK PAINS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NO
OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE TO YOUR VISITING MADAGASCAR, BUT TIMING
IS NOT GOOD AS IT FALLS RIGHT AFTER CONCLUSION OF FRANCO-
MALAGASY ACCORDS REQUIRING BULK OF FRENCH ARMED FORCES EVACUATE
BASES IN MADAGASCAR BY SEPTEMBER 1.

3. IN VIEW RUMORS REPEATED IN CERTAIN MALAGASY NEWSPAPERS THAT
AMERICANS OR OTHERS MAY TAKE OVER FRENCH BASES IN MADAGASCAR,
MALAGASY GOVT IS CONCERNED THAT VISIT BY HIGH- RANKING
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AMERICAN OFFICER LIKE YOURSELF COULD BE MISINTERPRETED BOTH BY FRENCH AND BY MALAGASY PUBLIC. THOUGH NOT STATED DIRECTLY, IT WAS ALSO CLEAR BY IMPLICATION THAT FONMIN RATSIRAKA DOES NOT WANT RISK THAT PRESS DISTORTION OF YOUR VISIT MIGHT TAKE BLOOM OFF TREMENDOUS POPULAR ACCLAIM HE HAS JUST RECEIVED AS MALAGASY NATIONALIST HERO WHO HAS SECURED REAL INDEPENDENCE FOR MADAGASCAR BY NEGOTIATING FOREIGNERS OUT OF THEIR MILITARY BASES HERE.

4. I ASKED BEZAZA WHEN HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT FOR YOUR TO VISIT MADAGASCAR. HE REPLIED BY BEGINNING NEXT YEAR.

5. I ALSO SAID WE WOULD SOON BE SENDING NOTE ASKING AUTHORIZATION FOR VISIT LA SALLE TO DIEGO- SUAREZ IN EARLY JULY. HE IMMEDIATELY INDICATED THAT AS THIS YOUR FLAGSHIP, SAME MISINTERPRETATIONS AND EMBARRASMENTS COULD ARISE. I NOTED THAT YOU WOULD NOT BE ON SHIP, BUT HAD INSTEAD PLANNED ENTER AND LEAVE MADAGASCAR BY AIRPLANE. THIS, HOWEVER, MADE NO DIFFERENCE TO HIM.

6. IN RESPONSE MY FURTHER PROBING, HE INDICATED THERE SHOULD, HOWEVER, BE NO PROBLEM IN LA SALLE VISITING MALAGASY PORTS OTHER THAN DIEGO- SUAREZ. IF YOU WISH, WE SHALL BE GLAD PURSUE THAT TACK.

7. I DID NOT SPECIFICALLY BROACH SCHEDULED FOUR- SHIIEBURN OVER IN DIEGO- SUAREZ IN SEPTEMBER. WE SHALL BE GLAD ASK FOREIGN OFFICE ABOUT THAT AT APPROPRIATE TIME, BUT I AM FRANKLY NOT SANGUINE ABOUT APPROVAL AS TURNOVER WOULD OCCUR SHORTLY AFTER EVACUATION DEADLINE OF SEPTEMBER 1 FOR MOST OF FRENCH FORCES FROM MADAGASCAR, AND SEEMS LIKELY THEREFORE RUN AFOUL OF SAME MALAGASY OBJECTIONS RAISED TO LA SALLE VISIT TO DIEGO- SUAREZ.

8. WE HAD CERTAINLY SHARED YOUR HOPE DIEGO- SUAREZ COULD BE OPENED UP FOR REGULAR SHIP VISITS AFTER CONCLUSION FRANCO- MALAGASY ACCORDS. NOW, HOWEVER, PROSPECT SEEMS DIM FOR USE THAT PORT (EXECPT IN EMERGENCIES) UNTIL BEGINNING NEXT YEAR. THIS COMES AS SURPRISE SINCE FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL AT NEXT LOWER LEVEL HAD FEW WEEKS AGO EXPRESSED VIEW THAT THERE SHOULD NOW BE NO PROBLEM ABOUT SHIP VISITS TO DIEGO- SUAREZ. WE SHALL ALSO PUT OFF VISITS THERE BY EMBASSY AND DATT, PROBABLY ALSO UNTIL BEGINNING NEXT YEAR.

9. I HAD BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN TANANARIVE AND
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TRAVELING WITH YOU TO NOSSI- BE AND DIEGO- SUAREZ, AND REGRET FROM BOTH OUR STANDPOINTS THAT THIS MUST NOW BE POSTPONED.

MENDENHALL

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